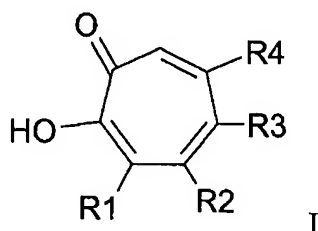


AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Claims 1-13. (Cancelled)

14. (new) A method for assaying tropolone or a derivative thereof of structure I



wherein R1 ,R2, R3, R4 can be, alone or in combination, hydrogen, alkyl, alkenyl, alkynyl, aryl, aralkyl, aralkenyl, aralkynyl, heteroaryl, heteroaralkyl, heteroaralkenyl or heteroaralkynyl groups, from animal cell culture supernatant or a proteinaceous solution containing an enriched product protein, comprising the steps of

- a. Separating the tropolone or its derivative from protein and, prior to that step or after that step, complexing the tropolone or its derivative with Cu(II)-ions in solution
- b. Assaying tropolone or its derivative by means of reverse phase HPLC with a hydrophobic stationary phase and a mobile phase which mobile phase comprises both Cu(II) ions and an ion-pairing reagent, characterized in that the

ion-pairing reagent is an ion-pairing carboxylic acid, or a salt thereof, that is more hydrophobic than trifluoroacetic acid.

15. (new) Method according to claim 14, characterised in that the hydrophobic stationary phase is an alkyl-silane stationary phase.
16. (new) Method according to claim 15, characterised in that the alkyl-silane stationary phase is an unbranched alkyl-silane phase, preferably is a C-18 alkyl-silane.
17. (new) Method according to claim 14, characterised in that the ion-pairing reagent has a dielectric constant that is equal to the dielectric constants of methylsulphonic acid or hexylsulphonic acid or is in the range defined by the dielectric constants of methylsulphonic acid and hexylsulphonic acid.
18. (new) Method according to claim 17, characterised in that the ion-pairing reagent is selected from the group consisting of propyl-sulphonic acid, butylsulphonic acid, pentylsulphonic acid, hexylsulphonic acid and salts of thereof
19. (new) Method according to claim 14, characterised in that the mobile phase comprises 1 to 30 % of acetonitrile in admixture with at least one further polar solvent.

20. (new) Method according to claim 19, characterised in the the polar solvent is water, methanol, ethanol or an admixture thereof, preferably the mobile phase comprises at least 60% water.
21. (new) Method according to claim 14, characterised in that the separation from protein is achieved by firstly precipitating tropolone or its derivative with CuSO_4 and recovering the precipitate and secondly removing protein from the recovered precipitate by ultrafiltration.
22. (new) Method according to claim 14, characterized in that the mobile phase comprises CuSO_4 as a source of Cu(II) ions.
23. (new) Method according to claim 22, characterized in that the concentration of CuSO_4 in the mobile phase is in the range of 0.05 % (w/v) to 0.2 % (w/v).
24. (new) Method according to claim 14, characterised in the mobile phase is watermiscible.
25. (new) Method according to claim 14, characterised in that the supernatant or proteinaceous solution comprising protein is enriched to a concentration of 1 mg/ml or higher.